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UNDP participation in the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries

1. In June 1989, the Co-ordinator of Assistance to the LDCs made a presentation to the Governing Council of the various activities that had already taken place towards the preparation of the Second United Nations Conference on LDCs scheduled for September 1990 in Paris. It was indicated in particular that the first intervention of UNDP in support of the Conference had been the initial approval of $1,255,000 from the SMF to assist the LDCs in the preparation of the Paris Conference and to assure their participation in the main meetings leading up to the Conference.

2. Since that time, several preparatory activities have taken place. This informational note reviews briefly these main events and UNDP involvement in the preparatory process.

A. Meeting of Governmental Experts of Donor Countries and Multilateral and Bilateral Financial and Technical Institutions with Representatives of the LDCs (22-31 May 1989, Geneva)

3. This meeting marked the beginning of a formal dialogue between the LDCs and the donor community in preparation for the Paris Conference. UNDP took an active part in this major event, and submitted a document that reviewed the UNDP role in assisting the LDCs since the 1981 Paris Conference and presented proposals on new objectives and aid modalities for the next decade. The meeting recognized the effective role of the round-table conferences and NatCAPs as tools of aid co-ordination for the LDCs. It also endorsed the positive contributions made by UNDP through the SMF/LDC and UNCDF.

4. During the meeting of experts in Geneva, many delegations emphasized the importance of grant small-scale capital assistance and the need to expand UNCDF

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assistance in the 1990s. Governing Council decision 89/57 of 30 June 1989, welcomed the opportunity to propose concrete measures for assisting the LDCs on the occasion of the Second Conference and urged the Conference to make appropriate recommendations about an increase in the resources of UNCDF. This call echoed an appeal made by the Meeting of Eminent Persons in The Hague. Consequently, UNCDF made a contribution to the preparatory process of the Conference in submitting a substantive paper to the forthcoming preparatory committee (March/April 1990). The paper presents the case for small-scale investments in the LCDs and UNCDF potential in delivering expanded capital assistance to the LDCs in the 1990s.

B. Inter-Agency Consultations on the LDCs (19-20 September, Geneva)

5. At this meeting, representatives of the United Nations agencies reviewed the outcome of the May meeting of Governmental Experts and made proposals for inclusion in the text to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee. UNDP proposed a thematic paper presenting an analysis of LDC technical co-operation trends and issues, to be submitted to the Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on the LDCs, to meet next in March or April 1990, as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. The preparation of this paper is under way. The document will provide an overview of technical co-operation in the LDCs, including its volume, allocation and trends. It will review the main issues related to technical co-operation, its effectiveness and its management and will propose measures to improve its quality in the coming years.

C. Review/evaluation of the round-table consultative group processes in the LDCs

6. Four consultants engaged by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have carried out this exercise, which involved discussions with several donor and recipient Governments. A report is being prepared for submission to the forthcoming Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on the LDCs. The recommendations of the report are expected to lead to the streamlining of these two major aid co-ordination tools to become more widely and effectively used for donor consultations with the LDCs in the coming decade.

D. Ministerial Level Meeting of LDCs in Dhaka

7. Upon the initiative and request of the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP decided to provide additional funding towards the possible organization of a ministerial level meeting of LDCs in Dhaka. This meeting would serve as a forum for the LDCs to adopt a common position for the Second Conference. The meeting is tentatively planned for early 1990.

E. Film on the round-table processes

8. In an effort to inform a greater number of people, UNDP has decided to produce a film on the round-table process with emphasis on the African experience. This film will be presented at the Second Conference to representatives of LDCs and donor countries. It will subsequently be used to present the essence of UNDP efforts through this co-ordination process to audiences outside government circles which have been exposed to the round-table process.

9. In conclusion, it should be noted that the Co-ordinator of Assistance to the LDCs is in continuous dialogue with the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Conference. UNDP will continue this close consultation process throughout the preparatory stage, during which a series of thematic and special purpose meetings are scheduled to take place.

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